

ZECHARIAH – Part 2 (“The Lord Remembers”)

Christian Formation
The Post-Exilic Period
22 October 2017

From Last Time ...

- I don't want to spend much time on the remaining three visions unless one has questions. Check the handout from last week.
- Even so, what were some of the problems afflicting the returnees that kept them from building the temple?
- The main lesson of the visions is this: There are no excuses for not doing God's work—in this case building the temple.

Interlude Concerning the Branch

(Zech 6.9 – 15)

- Vss. 9 – 10: Apparently another caravan had arrived from Babylonia w/ gifts for the building of the temple (cf. vs. 15)
- Vss. 11 & 12: Zechariah places a crown on the high priest Joshua as a type of the ultimate builder of the temple who is called the “Branch.” Appears to be priest *and* ruler.
- And who is the “Branch?” (Also mentioned in Zech 3.8; Is 11.1, Jer 23.5, 33.15)
- In the NT, “Branch” is never applied to Jesus, so why do we think Jesus is the Branch?
- Combine Is 11 (Branch) & 61 (Spirit) with Lk 4 (Jesus quotes Is 61 and applies the Spirit passage of Is 61 to himself.)

Zech 7.1 – 7

- In the fourth year of King Darius, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah on the fourth day of the ninth month, which is Chislev. 2 Now the town of Bethel had sent **Sharezer** and **Regemmelech** and their men to seek the favor of the Lord, 3 speaking to the priests who belong to the house of the Lord of hosts, and to the prophets, saying, **“Shall I weep in the fifth month and abstain, as I have done these many years?”** 4 Then the word of the Lord of hosts came to me, saying, 5 “Say to all the people of the land and to the priests, ‘When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months these seventy years, was it actually for Me that you fasted? 6 When you eat and drink, do you not eat for yourselves and do you not drink for yourselves? 7 Are not these the words which the Lord proclaimed by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and prosperous along with its cities around it, and the Negev and the foothills were inhabited?’”

Question about Fasting

(Zech 7 & 8)

- A question arises: “Shall I weep in the fifth month and abstain, as I have done these many years?” (vs. 3)
- Was this a serious question or another way to stall?
 - Probably serious after 70 years in Babylon without a temple; and now that the temple is being built, is it time to stop?
- What about the dates mentioned?
 - 4/9 [Lunar month/day]: city wall breached (Jer 39.2);
 - 5/7: destruction of the temple (2 Kgs 25.8)
 - 7/3: Gedaliah assassinated (2 Kgs 25.25; Jer 41.2)
 - 10/10: (later) Beginning of siege of Jerusalem (2 Kgs 25.1; Ezek 24.1, 2)

An Interesting Historical Note

- The “Fifth of Av” (Tish’a b’Av) is a fast day even today and commemorates the destruction of the two temples in Jerusalem (587/6 B.C. and A.D. [or C.E] 70).
- Other historical events on Tisha b’Av:
 - 1095 First Crusade declared by Pope Urban II.
 - 1290 Expulsion of Jews from England
 - 1492 Inquisition in Spain and Portugal
 - 1914 First World War begins
 - 1942 Deportations from Warsaw Ghetto to Treblinka

But Back to Fasting

(Zech 7.8 – 14)

- The fasting in the past was perfunctory (Cf. Is 58)
- Real fasting is to “Dispense true justice and practice kindness and compassion each to his brother; and do not oppress the widow or the orphan, the stranger or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another” (vss. 9, 10).
- But the people did not listen (vss. 11 – 13)
- So the Lord scattered them (vs. 13)

Zech 8.1 – 8

- In spite of the “downer” at the end of chapter 7, the Lord reasserts his love for Jerusalem (vss. 1 – 3).
- Vss. 4, 5: “Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘Old men and old women will again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each man with his staff in his hand because of age. 5 And the streets of the city will be filled with boys and girls playing in its streets.’”

Center Plaza of the Old City of Jerusalem



Zech 8.9 – 13

- So: “Let your hands be strong, you who are listening in these days to these words from the mouth of the prophets [Haggai & Zechariah], those who spoke in the day that the foundation of the house of the Lord of hosts was laid, to the end that the temple might be built” (vs. 9).
- Unlike former days of trouble, peace will come (vss. 10 – 13). Such that...
- “Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘The fast of the fourth, the fast of the fifth, the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth months will become joy, gladness, and cheerful feasts for the house of Judah; so love truth and peace.’”
- In short, do God’s will, and grief will become joy!

Zech 8.20 – 23

- The universal call for all nations to seek the Lord in Jerusalem:
 - “Peoples will come, even the inhabitants of many cities. 21 The inhabitants of one will go to another, saying, “Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts” (vss. 20, 21)
 - “Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘In those days ten men from all the nations will grasp the garment of a Jew, saying, “Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.”’” (Vs. 23)
- Explain this verse to me.

The Lesson from Chapters 7 & 8

- Basically, chapters 7 & 8 show the great reversal from
 - rejection to rejuvenation;
 - dissatisfaction to delight;
 - gloominess to glory;
- (I couldn't think of more alliteration, so I'll stop here.)

The Advent and the Rejection of the Messiah (Zech 9.1 – 11.17)

- 9.1 – 8: Alexander's march thru the Levant

The screenshot shows the Amazon product page for the book "The Evidence of Prophecy: Fulfilled Prediction as a Testimony to the Truth of Christianity" edited by Robert C. Newman. The page includes the Amazon logo, navigation links, and a promotional banner for Amazon Home Services. The book's cover is displayed on the left, and the right side contains the title, authors (Dr. Robert C. Newman, Frederick A. Aston, Dr. John A. Bloom, Eugenie Johnston, Samuel H. Kellogg, Dr. Robert W. Manweiler, Dr. Elaine A. Phillips, Dr. Perry G. Phillips, Calvin E. Stowe), a price of \$15.00 (prime), and a description: "One of the most powerful evidences for the truth of biblical Christianity is the fulfillment of predictions made in Scripture. Here, nine authors discuss prophecies made centuries in advance about Israel, her neighbors and her Messiah. Specific attempts to explain these away as vague, misinterpreted or written after the event, are countered. If you have ever wondered whether or not there is objective evidence to answer the ultimate questions, you should read this book." There are also links for "See all formats and editions", "Report incorrect product information", and a promotion for two free audiobooks from Audible.

The screenshot shows a page from a book, likely "The Evidence of Prophecy", titled "Chapter 4 Alexander's Conquest of Palestine" by Perry G. Phillips. The text discusses the prophet Zechariah's predictions of Alexander's invasion. It states: "Can it be that the prophet Zechariah, in the ninth chapter of his book, predicted details of Alexander's invasion nearly 200 years before it happened? Yes! In this chapter we shall establish the date his predictions were made and see how they were fulfilled in history. First we shall look at the prophet Zechariah and his book. Then we will examine critical problems raised against the unity and authorship of Zechariah 9-14. Finally, we shall discuss Zech 9:1-8 verse by verse, showing how it was fulfilled in Alexander's invasion." The page also includes a section titled "Zechariah and his Book" which explains that Zechariah was a grandson of Iddo, a priestly family that returned from Babylonian exile around 536 BC. It further details the main themes of Zechariah's prophecies: (1) the overthrow of Israel's enemies, (2) the exaltation of Zion, and (3) the universal reign of the future Messiah. A final section, "Criticism of Zechariah 9-14", notes that while most scholars accept chapters 1-8 as Zechariah's, chapters 9-14 are often attributed to other authors, with a reference to Joseph Mede's 1653 observation that the prophecy in Matt 27:9-10 was a free rendition of Zech 11:12-13, which the Gospel writer attributed to Jeremiah.

Zech 9.9

- Unlike a proud conqueror:
- “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey” (vs. 9).
- For fulfillment, cf. Matthew 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-11, Luke 19:28-44, and John 12:12-19. For one or two animals, consult commentaries.
- Note the contrast between Alexander and the coming king: donkey vs. horse; righteous; gentle.
- But although the king comes in humility, a great battle must be fought before all enemies are subdued. The future battles are taken up later in the book.

Zech 9.11 – 17

- More on the deliverance of Judah and Jerusalem.
- Just as God protected his people from Alexander the Great, so he will ultimately protect his people and his city from other powerful enemies. No doubt, this is eschatological.
- Vs. 13: With the view towards Alexander, Zechariah sees eventual conflict between Greece and Judah, and this comes to play in the Intertestamental Period.

Zech 10: False Shepherds and One True Shepherd

- Zech 10.1 – 4: Many shepherds have failed, but the Lord will raise up one superior shepherd from the family of Judah.
 - Vs. 2: The people wander like sheep because of diviners, teraphim, lying visions, and false dreams. (False shepherds.)
 - Vs. 3: God will punish the false shepherds
 - Vs. 4: God will raise a “cornerstone” to lead the people, and he will be a true shepherd (Cf. Is 28.16; Ps 118.22: Mt 21.42, Mk 12.10, Lk 20.17, 1 Pt 2.4, 7)
- The rest of the chapter deals w/ the regathering and the strengthening of Ephraim (Joseph) and of Judah (vss. 6 & 12)—i.e., all of Israel. This ties into Zech 8.4, 5. “Egypt” and “Assyria” are figurative for “everywhere.”¹⁶

Key Verses for Zech 11 (Part 1)

- 11.1 – 3: The vegetation is a metaphor for powerful nations. Note Ezek 31 where Assyria is likened to a cedar. For alien kings as shepherds, cf. Jer 25.34 – 37, 50.44.
- 11.4 - 6: Go ahead, continue with your evil shepherding. See where that gets you.
- 7 - 14: The good shepherd is rejected; (vs. 8: unknown who the three evil shepherds were. Perhaps the number "3" means completeness. I.e., I got rid of *all* the evil leaders. (For more on selfish shepherds, cf. Ezek 34.1 - 12)
- 15 - 17: A worthless shepherd replaces him.
- Unfortunately, a good shepherd is not always accepted by the people. (Why?) Note how this applies to Jesus.

Key Verses for Zech 11 (Part 2)

- The two staffs “Favor” and “Union” (vs. 7). A good shepherd is gracious to the flock and attempts to keep the animals together. Rejecting the good shepherd disperses the flock. Breaking “Favor” is the breaking of the covenant.
- Vss. 13, 14: The evaluation of the good shepherd—30 pieces of silver! (Quoted Mt 27.9; cf. Mt 26.15, 27.3, 5, 6)
- In the NT, Jesus is the good shepherd (Jn 10)

Summary: The Rejection of the Messianic King

- General summary of the chapter:
 - In a quick sense, in Ch 9 the king is coming, in Ch 10 the defenses are readied, but in Ch 11 unbelief sabotages the whole project, as it were.
 - The oppressor is under the judgment of God, but with God's people unwilling to act in belief, the oppressor has his day as the people of the Lord defeat themselves.
 - They reject the promised deliverer and the assurance of blessing.
- Lots of grief will come upon Israel because of the rejection of the good shepherd, and that leads to chapters 12 – 14.